POLICY BRIEF

Artificial Intelligence in Algorithmic Diplomacy: Shaping Health Governance and Equity

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Executive Summary

Artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly becoming a fixture of policymaking—informing decisions, facilitating negotiation and conflict resolution, and increasingly shaping global health governance. Through algorithmic diplomacy, governments and international institutions use data-driven tools to analyze health information, monitor and evaluate programs, identify disparities, and develop policy. Used well, these tools can strengthen transparency, accountability, and equity in global health decision-making.

Used carelessly, they can do the opposite. In low-resource settings, weak regulatory frameworks and unresolved ethical concerns mean that AI risks deepening the very inequities it could help close. This brief identifies the principal problems AI introduces into health governance, examines the role of algorithmic diplomacy in addressing them, and proposes policy actions for governments and global health leaders to ensure that AI advances—rather than undermines—health equity.

Problem Statement

AI is now widely used in algorithmic diplomacy to improve decision-making, strengthen communication, and enable international collaboration in health governance. But its benefits are unevenly distributed, and its risks fall hardest on those least equipped to manage them—raising the need for ethical governance grounded in international law and shared values. Five problems stand out.

Restricted participation of low-resource countries. Low-resource countries have limited influence over AI-driven global health decisions, which currently favor wealthier nations. Decisions that directly shape their health systems are made largely without them.

Bias, human rights, and data protection. AI systems can produce biased outcomes that unfairly affect human rights and compromise the privacy and protection of personal data.

Misinformation and deepfakes. False or manipulated content can mislead decision-makers and erode public trust in health systems.

Fragmented governance. Weak coordination among authorities produces inconsistent policies and gaps in oversight of how AI is used in health systems.

Resource inaccessibility. Low-resource countries often lack the AI infrastructure, funding, and expertise to build or govern these systems, excluding them from algorithmic diplomacy and from equitable participation in health governance.

Taken together, these problems demand a coordinated policy response. Algorithmic diplomacy, properly governed, can be part of the solution rather than part of the problem—reducing global disparities and promoting health equity.

Policy Options

1. **Strengthen algorithmic diplomacy in health governance.** Promote ethical AI, foster cross-border collaboration, build inclusive governance frameworks, harmonize regulations

across jurisdictions, and invest in institutional capacity so that global health outcomes are fair, transparent, and effective.

2. **Invest in low-resource settings.** Provide technical, financial, and human-capacity support so that health systems with limited infrastructure can deploy AI equitably and sustainably—and participate in shaping the rules that govern it.
3. **Institutionalize transparency and accountability.** Require that AI systems used in health governance operate transparently, and that the institutions deploying them remain answerable for the outcomes those systems produce.
4. **Adopt ethical AI measures for health governance.** Implement global ethical guidelines, protect data privacy, and mitigate bias—paired with inclusive participation by low-resource countries and robust monitoring to promote equitable health outcomes.

Recommendations

Governments and global health leaders should pursue these complementary options in tandem.

For governments

- Anchor national policies on AI in health in existing international instruments—the WHO's *Ethics and Governance of Artificial Intelligence for Health*, UNESCO's *Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence*, the OECD AI Principles, the EU's General Data Protection Regulation, and the African Union's Digital Transformation Strategy—rather than building frameworks from scratch.
- Harmonize AI regulations with partner countries to close oversight gaps and reduce governance fragmentation.
- Make transparency, data-privacy protection, and bias mitigation binding requirements for any AI system deployed in the health sector.

For global health leaders and institutions

- Use algorithmic diplomacy to promote ethical AI and cross-border collaboration, drawing on the growing peer-reviewed evidence base in digital health.
- Direct technical, financial, and human-capacity investment toward low-resource settings so that limited infrastructure does not translate into permanent exclusion.
- Guarantee low-resource countries a meaningful role in AI-driven health governance, with robust monitoring of equity outcomes.

Conclusion

AI in algorithmic diplomacy can strengthen health governance and advance equity—but only if its risks are governed as deliberately as its benefits are pursued. Bias, misinformation, and the exclusion of low-resource countries are central governance challenges, not side effects; coordinated policy, ethical AI, and sustained investment in capacity can reduce disparities and build equitable health systems.